



Billing Code: 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE356

Endangered Species; File No. 19716

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Robert Hardy, 100 8th Avenue Southeast Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Fish & Wildlife Research Institute, St Petersburg, FL 33701, has applied in due form for a permit to take loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), green (*Chelonia mydas*), Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), and leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) sea turtles for purposes of scientific research.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or e-mail comments must be received on or before [*insert date 30 days after date of publication in the **FEDERAL REGISTER***].

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review by selecting "Records Open for Public Comment" from the "Features" box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 19716 from the list of available applications.

These documents are also available upon written request or by appointment in the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-

West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376.

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, at the address listed above. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile to (301) 713-0376, or by email to *NMFS.PrIComments@noaa.gov*. Please include the File No. in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division at the address listed above. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Arturo Herrera or Amy Hapeman, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

The applicant requests a five-year permit to locate and describe surface-pelagic drift communities of the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico that serve as developmental habitat for surface-pelagic juvenile and neonate sea turtles, to quantify threats to pelagic sea turtles, and to gather information on their life-history, genetics, movements, behavior, and diet. Researchers would conduct vessel surveys to count and pursue for capture by dip net up to 300 loggerhead, 200 green, 60 hawksbill, 130 Kemp's ridley and 10 leatherback sea turtles annually. An additional 150 loggerheads and 440 leatherbacks

could be harassed annually during vessel surveys but would not be pursued for capture. Depending on life stage and size, captured sea turtles would have the following procedures performed prior to release: measure, weigh, oral swab, esophageal lavage, skin and scute biopsy, flipper and passive integrated transponder tag, and/or epoxy attachment of a satellite or VHF transmitter. Voided fecal samples also would be collected opportunistically.

Dated: December 29, 2015.

Julia Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 2015-33182 Filed: 1/5/2016 8:45 am; Publication Date: 1/6/2016]